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ABSTRACT

To examine reasons for a 3-year decline in enrollment in evening courses at North Arkansas Community/Technical College, a project was undertaken to examine evening students' opinions of scheduling and evening program services at the college. A review of the literature on evening programs and methods to assess student opinions was conducted, and a questionnaire was developed and distributed to 120 students enrolled in 10 classes in spring 1995. The questionnaire solicited information on student demographics, preferences in class scheduling, and satisfaction with offerings and services. Results of the survey included the following: (1) 77% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the days classes met, compared to 63% for class times, and 58% for the variety of courses offered; (2) with respect to the availability of services, 76% were very satisfied or satisfied with library services, 75% with instructor availability, 71% with computer labs, and 70% with the instructional support lab; (3) the availability of food services received the lowest rating at 37%; (4) with respect to the quality of services, the highest rating was given for library services at 76%, followed by instructor availability and computer labs at 72% each and instructional support at 70%; and (5) the lowest rated service in terms of quality was food services at 46%. The project concluded that there was need for improvement in the variety and times of classes scheduled for evening students and access to selected services. (Contains 33 references.) (The survey instrument is appended.) (KP)

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ED 387 153

AN ANALYSIS OF EVENING PROGRAM COURSE OFFERINGS AND SERVICES AT NORTH ARKANSAS COMMUNITY/TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Politics, Law and Economics of Higher Education

James J. Stockton

North Arkansas Community/Technical College

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A practicum report presented to Programs for Higher Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University

September, 1995

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Abstract of a practicum report presented to Nova Southeastern University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

AN ANALYSIS OF EVENING PROGRAM COURSE OFFERINGS AND SERVICES AT NORTH ARKANSAS COMMUNITY/TECHNICAL COLLEGE

by

James J. Stockton

September, 1995

The problem under investigation was a decline in enrollment in evening courses at North Arkansas Community/Technical College (NACTC). The purpose of this study was to examine student opinions regarding NACTC's evening program services and class schedule. There were two research questions for this study. First, "What are evening students' opinions of the evening class schedule offered by North Arkansas Community/Technical College?" Second, "What are evening students' opinions of services offered by North Arkansas Community/Technical College?"

Procedures included a review of related literature. Evening program objectives related to services and class scheduling were identified. Criteria to measure success were articulated, and a student questionnaire was developed with the help of a formative committee. The questionnaire was administered to a cluster random sample of evening students during the 1994 spring semester, and a summative committee of experts validated results. Data were shared with NACTC's president, vice president of instruction, and marketing committee.

At least 70% of students surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the days evening classes were offered, and availability and quality of the library, computer labs, instructional support lab, and faculty assistance outside the classroom. Less than 70% were satisfied with evening schedule variety and times, and availability and quality of the college bookstore, food services, counseling/advising, registration, business office, tutoring, financial aid, and veterans' services.

This study confirmed literature sources calling for a greater variety of evening courses and improvement in most services to evening students. It is recommended that NACTC consider innovative scheduling alternatives.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Located in Harrison, Arkansas, North Arkansas Community/Technical College (NACTC) is a comprehensive two-year public college. The institution, formed July 1, 1993 by the merger of North Arkansas Community College (NACC) and Twin Lakes Technical College (TLTC), offers transfer courses and programs of study, one-year technical certificate programs, and two-year academic and technical associate degree programs. NACTC has two campuses in Harrison: the South Campus, the former NACC, and the North Campus, the former TLTC.

North Arkansas Community/Technical College offers academic and technical credit classes during morning, afternoon, and evening hours. Until 1995, evening courses were scheduled four days per week, Monday through Thursday, during the fall and spring semesters. Friday night courses were added in the spring semester of 1995. About 60 evening class sections are taught each semester. Most of the same services (e.g., library resources, computer labs, bookstore, and tutoring) are provided to evening students that are available during the day, although operating hours limit availability.

Nature of the Problem

Over a four-year period, from 1991 through 1994, there was a decline in enrollment in evening courses offered by North Arkansas Community/Technical College. In the fall of 1991 the duplicated headcount of students enrolled in evening classes was 802. The average duplicated enrollment during the fall semesters of 1993 and 1994 was 754, with a low enrollment mark of 733 in the fall of 1993. The problem was that data were not available for use in analyzing evening scheduling and services. Information was needed by the college to design strategies to bolster enrollment and improve access.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conduct an analysis of North Arkansas Community/Technical College's evening program. The focus of the study was on student opinions regarding evening services and the evening class schedule.

Significance to the Institution

In a classic study, Wattenbarger (1982) finds that two-year colleges are historically supported by three sources of funding: local taxes, state taxes, and

tuition fees. A loss of enrollment in evening classes has a negative impact on the fiscal well-being of the college.

Deegan and Tillery (1985), in an examination of the development of American two-year colleges, list providing access to education as an historically significant part of the mission of community colleges. In order to promote access to its programs and courses, NACTC must ensure that evening classes and services meet student needs.

Relationship to Seminar

This practicum is directly related to the Politics, Law, and Economics of Higher Education seminar. Martorana, Kelly, and Nespoli (1994) note that "successful institutional operation recognizes the economic variables at work and accommodates them through policy and operating decisions" (p. 64). This analysis of the college's evening program provides information needed to make operating decisions, including class scheduling and services offered.

Relationship to Concentration

This practicum is directly related to general institutional administration. One of the primary

responsibilities of administrators in higher education is to ensure that programs and services meet student and community needs. The responsibility is particularly important for senior administrators, who make decisions regarding the overall institution's budget and programs.

Research Questions

There were two research questions for this study. First, "What are evening students' opinions of the evening class schedule offered by North Arkansas Community/Technical College?" Second, "What are evening students' opinions of services offered by North Arkansas Community/Technical College?"

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this practicum, the following terms required clarification.

College preparatory courses. Remedial courses designed to prepare students to take transfer classes.

Community education classes. Short-term, inexpensive courses offered by the college for personal enrichment that do not offer college credit.

Credit classes. All classes offered by the college that earn credit in a certificate or associate degree program are credit classes.

Duplicated headcount. The total enrollment of all classes. Each student is counted in each class she/he is enrolled in during a given semester.

Evening program. The evening program at North Arkansas Community/Technical College includes all credit classes offered at either the North or South campus that start after 5 p.m.

Full-time equivalent. A college's full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment is calculated by dividing the total number of semester hours taken by all students by 12. Twelve hours is considered to be a full-time schedule of classes.

Non-duplicated headcount. Actual enrollment. Each student is only counted once, regardless of how many classes she/he takes during the semester.

Non-traditional students. For the purposes of this study, non-traditional students are students who are 23 years of age or older.

Traditional students. Traditional students, for the purposes of this study, are those age 22 or under.

Transfer classes. Transfer classes' credits are accepted by other postsecondary institutions that offer associate, baccalaureate, and/or graduate degrees.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

A review of the literature was conducted to gain an understanding of methods to assess student satisfaction with scheduling and services. Books, journal articles, ERIC documents, and other materials were reviewed in an effort to ascertain the information required to conduct this study.

Four major areas of information were identified during the literature review: (a) the relationship of student success to programs and scheduling, (b) studies of evening class schedules, (c) studies of the quality and availability of evening program services, and (d) methods of assessing evening student opinions. Over 70 literature sources were reviewed, and 33 are included in this report.

Schedule, Programs Affect Student Success

Increasing numbers of non-traditional students attend two-year colleges at night, taking a few hours each semester. Bers and Smith (1991) note the majority of America's college freshmen are enrolled in two-year commuter institutions, and most of the over 6 million

adults annually who take college credit classes attend on a part-time basis.

Sanford-Harris (1992) finds that "graduation with an associate degree after two years of study is less and less the norm. More colleges and universities are enrolling increasing numbers of nontraditional students....Family, work, and financial obligations have made a full-time course load less realistic for large numbers of these students" (p. 75).

Grove (1992) cites American College Testing institutional data showing the dropout rate for college freshmen at two-year public colleges at 47.9% in 1992. That figure compares with a 27.4% dropout rate at private two-year institutions.

At Cuyamaca College, a community college located in El Cajon, California, 55% of students enrolled in 1990 fall semester classes did not return the following spring. Fralick (1993) finds, from a survey of 1,000 Cuyamaca College dropouts, that 82% worked during the time they were enrolled in classes, and 72% worked full-time. Twenty-three percent of the former students left school because of employment, and 6% blamed difficulties scheduling classes.

Although 78% of dropouts surveyed by Cuyamaca College considered their college experience a success, Fralic (1993) notes efforts to increase retention rates and provide access to programs and services are important to student achievement. "For...part-time working adults, college enrollment is secondary to careers and family. When planning programs and schedules, the needs of these adults should be taken into consideration" (p. 34).

Bers and Smith (1991), in a study of a suburban community college in the Midwest, examined factors in student persistence after enrollment in college. They find the more hours a student worked, the more likely she/he was to dropout. However, students employed part-time were more likely to stay in college than students who did not work at all. Students' educational objectives were a significant factor in persistence. Students taking classes to earn a degree for the purpose of transferring to a four-year university were more likely to stay in school than students enrolled for job-related purposes or personal enrichment.

Coll and VonSeggern (1993) report there were substantial retention differences between community

college students involved in counseling-related programs, compared to students not involved in such programs. They recommend that students be surveyed each semester to improved delivery of curriculum and campus services.

Fujita (1994), in a retention study for Hudson County Community College, finds that curriculum and courses were cited by 28% of evening students as reasons other students they knew left the college. College services were listed by 8% of the evening students.

A telephone survey was conducted by Snead State Junior College to determine why students dropped out of classes. All of the leading factors listed by former students were outside of the institution's control, with the exception of one: class scheduling. Based on study findings, the recommendation is that classes be planned on an annual basis (Cooper, 1990).

Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District (1994) surveyed students to determine why they attended college and why they dropped out. Financial difficulties and cost were the leading reasons for dropouts, followed by lack of course availability, and scheduling problems.

Institutions other than North Arkansas Community/Technical College have also experienced enrollment losses in evening programs. Sinclair Community College (1993) reports that its 1993 fall semester enrollment in evening classes fell 5.7%, from 7,623 to 7,191. During the same time period, the institution's daytime and weekend enrollment increased by 6.5%.

Robert Topor, author of Marketing in Higher Education, notes that "successful marketing begins with the client, not the institution. It means looking from the outside in, not from the inside out" (cited in Grove, 1992, p. 24).

Evening Class Schedules

In a study of 444 evening students at Armstrong State College, McCormick (1992) finds not enough classes were scheduled in the evenings, based on student opinions. Just 19% of respondents thought they could obtain a degree by attending only night classes.

Over 6,000 residents of Charlottesville, Virginia and the surrounding area were surveyed about programs and services offered by Piedmont Virginia Community College. Head (1991) reports respondents were less

interested in traditional college services, including student activities, and more concerned about receiving a wider variety of course offerings at convenient times and locations. The option cited most by respondents, when asked which would be most convenient for attending college, was evening courses.

Baca, Burr, Minter, Petersen, and Pina (1993) find the most significant obstacle to credit class enrollment among potential students ages 26 through 40 in Las Cruces, New Mexico was lack of time. A significantly greater number of males than females were aware of evening and weekend class scheduling, the existence of student support services, and availability of financial aid.

Based on findings from a survey of 246 students during the fall semester of 1991 at William Rainey Harper College, Lucas (1992) notes that 82% of respondents took classes at night or on weekends because of jobs, personal reasons, or scheduling conflicts. Hawk and Grosset (1993), in a survey of off-campus locations conducted for the Community College of Philadelphia, observe that convenience of class times, location, and availability were important factors

evening students considered. Day students were more critical than evening students of academic experiences.

Sworder (1991) finds 73% of students at Saddleback College who worked 31 hours or more a week enrolled in evening classes only. Thirty-six percent of respondents were enrolled in some day and evening classes. New students were the least likely to enroll in evening courses. Only 12% of students taking evening classes exclusively were not employed.

A mail survey was conducted of 168 non-traditional students who did not return to Cumberland County College. Examining the results, Stolar (1991) notes that 25.5% of respondents listed employment preparation as the primary reason they enrolled in classes. Improvement of skills for present job ranked second in order of attendance reasons (21.8%), followed by preparing for further education (18.8%).

In an in-class survey of currently enrolled non-traditional students at Cumberland County College, Tuesday was listed as the most popular night for classes. Of all respondents, 40.2% attended classes only at night and 23.3% split time between evening and day courses. The need for a greater variety of evening

course selections was the most frequent complaint related to instruction (Stolar, 1991).

From a 10% return rate on 20,948 mail surveys, Sinclair Community College (1994) notes class availability and scheduling were listed as student concerns. Only 65.4% of students agreed that required courses were available when needed, and 22.7% did not believe course schedules were convenient.

Western Campus students at Cuyahoga Community College were surveyed during the fall of 1989 to determine preferred class times. Richards, Gabriel, and Clegg (1990) find that, of all listed day, night, and weekend times, 6 p.m. was the class time preferred by the largest number of students, 10 a.m. ranked second, and 8 p.m. was third. Evening students indicated they would rather attend class twice a week (63%) than once per week (21%).

Hect (1991) reports that Saturday students at Parkland College who participated in an interest survey listed Saturday mornings from 8 a.m. until noon as their first choice for a time to take a credit class. The students' preferred evening class time was Monday through Thursday at 6 p.m.

From a June, 1990 telephone survey of 1,200 Michigan community college students, Michigan State Board of Education (1990) finds 65% of students interviewed rated availability of a variety of course offerings at night as excellent (20%) or good (45%). McCormick (1994), based on a focus group consisting of eight male and 28 female non-traditional students at a medium-sized public liberal arts college, reports the following concerns about the evening program: (a) lack of upper level courses, (b) need for more course variety, and (c) scheduling overlaps.

Marrow (1994) offers these suggestions for a continuous quality improvement process to address academic scheduling: (a) draft a clear statement of scheduling problems, (b) analyze problems, (c) develop a plan to address problems, and (d) implement the plan. Ineffective coordination between academic division chairs was a problem. The Hazard Community College plan developed a master matrix showing utilization of all classes, rooms, and times. Input from faculty, staff, and students is recommended. The study supports a student-focused schedule, better coordination between college units, and a timetable for schedule development.

Kester, Grosz, and Samuelson (1994) report the success of Afternoon College at San Jose City College. Using classrooms that traditionally stand empty during afternoon hours, the college offered a mini-semester of transfer courses that met Monday through Thursday for 12 weeks starting about three weeks after the beginning of the regular term. The result was that 257 students enrolled in eight general education classes in the fall of 1992 and 251 students were enrolled in seven courses in the spring of 1993. "Despite the nontraditional scheduling times, productivity rates for the program as a whole are near the all-college average, and FTES income is adequate to support the program at this level" (p. 1).

Evening Program Services

A telephone survey was conducted to determine part-time Michigan community college students' access to night programs. Michigan State Board of Education (1990) reports library access was rated excellent or good by 55% of respondents, computer labs by 44%, counseling and guidance services by 31%, and tutoring by 25%. Most students (70%) said willingness of part-time faculty to meet with them was excellent or good.

Glendale Community College has conducted spring student surveys since 1986. Spicer (1990) finds evening students are as satisfied with student services as their daytime counterparts, despite lower recognition and use of services. Evening students were significantly more satisfied from their use of the math/science and tutorial centers. In terms of the entire cohort, students with educational plans tended to indicate a greater satisfaction (83%) with 15 general support services than students without plans (76%).

Amos (1991) finds 85.9% of all students, day and evening, surveyed at the University of California, Davis were very satisfied or satisfied with library services. That compares with a 1990 national norm on the Student Opinion Study of 80.2%.

Sinclair Community College (1994) finds students enrolled in classes the previous year were less likely than new students to agree that counselors give accurate information and instructors are available when needed. Overall, 66.6% of 1,909 respondents agreed that counselors gave accurate information, and 79.9% confirmed that instructors were available when they were needed.

Although instructors at William Rainey Harper College listed access to the bookstore and temperature control as top evening program needs, Lucas (1992) finds students named access to the gym or pool for a personal workout most often (35.9%) and access to placement or career information next (30%) when asked what services they would take advantage of if they were available at more convenient times. Of students surveyed, 16.3% said they use food services; 18.2% said they would use food services if they were offered at more convenient times.

Based on a survey of 380 evening program students enrolled in Louisiana State University's 1992 spring semester courses at various locations, Evans, Ellett, Culross, and Loup (1993) report most students were satisfied with professors' willingness to provide help and guidance outside the classroom. Only 7.4% of respondents were traditional college-age students.

McCormick (1994) notes evening program issues revealed in focus groups discussions included availability of advisors, access to facilities, and visibility of security. Hect (1991) finds suggestions for improvement of the weekend program include better access to food services, bookstore, library, and

computer labs. Hawk and Grosset (1993) find evening students at off-campus locations were less likely than day students to be critical of services such as the library, counseling, advising, and financial aid.

At Cumberland County College, non-traditional students offered 463 suggestions for improvement. Of that total, 118 proposed that various campus offices should extend hours of service. The college bookstore (30), cafeteria (28), counseling (25), library (18), advising (14), learning lab (11), and financial aid office (11) each were mentioned on more than 10 surveys (Stolar, 1991).

Sworder (1991) notes that only 7.8% of 983 day and night students had ever made an appointment to meet with an instructor in her or his office at Saddleback College. However, 78% thought their instructors were approachable, helpful and supportive, and 70.4% had talked with a counselor or advisor about career plans.

From a survey of 478 day and night community college students at three Tennessee institutions, Douzenis (1994) reports respondents had a limited involvement in typical college experiences. Students were more involved in activities directly related to

course assignments than social integration activities. Most respondents reported they spend less than six hours outside the classroom each week on campus, leaving limited time to use services.

Methods To Assess Evening Student Opinions

Palmer (1992) finds a survey of current students to be useful in devising enrollment strategies for vocational and technical program students. After gathering data reflecting student and employer opinions, programs should be aligned with student needs, including the times classes are offered.

Schauerman, Manno, and Peachy (1993) report that focus groups were used to develop a quality function deployment, a continuous improvement strategy that allows transfer of customer requirements into organizational language, at El Camino College in California. A high correlation with customer needs was noted in these areas: (a) teaching and learning, (b) learning support, (c) human resource development, and (d) leadership. Auxiliary services discussed by the focus groups included parking, substance abuse programs, food services, child development center, bookstore, campus police, and athletics.

Baca et al. (1993) employed a telephone survey in Las Cruces, N.M. Michigan State Board of Education (1990) also chose a telephone survey to poll community college students state-wide.

In the design of a survey to measure employee satisfaction with the usefulness and quality of three offices at Pima Community College, Merren (1992) uses a 1-5 scale, with "1" equaling not useful or poor quality and "5" equaling extremely useful or very high quality. The instrument was utilized to evaluate three college offices: institutional research, computer services, and planning.

Amos (1991) employs a five-point range to measure satisfaction with services at the University of California, Davis. Of the choices, "1" meant the student was very dissatisfied; "5" indicated she/he was very satisfied.

Evening surveys can be an important method to support changes within the organization. After conducting a survey of evening students, a budget proposal was presented to Armstrong State College to create the position of night administrator, and services to evening students were expanded (McCormick, 1992).

Summary

Class scheduling and services are important to the success of all two-year college students, including evening and non-traditional students (Fralic, 1993). Availability of classes is often listed as a reason why students drop out of college (Cooper, 1990; Fralic, 1993; Fujita, 1994; Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, 1994), and lack of services also is a factor (Coll & VonSeggern, 1993; Fujita, 1994). In order to market higher education, student needs must be considered (Topor, cited in Grove, 1992).

Several studies point to the need for a greater number and variety of evening classes (Head, 1991; McCormick, 1992; McCormick, 1994; Sinclair Community College, 1994). Non-traditional students report that work and other time constraints are the principal reason they are unable to attend college (Baca et al., 1993; Lucas, 1992).

Evening students tend to be employed (Sworder, 1991), and non-traditional students attend classes more often in the evening (Stolar, 1991). Class times, location, and availability are important decision-making factors (Hawk & Grosset, 1993), and 6 p.m. is a popular

starting time for evening courses (Hect, 1991; Richards et al., 1990). The process of class scheduling should be well thought-out (Marrow, 1994), and alternative times and schedules should be considered (Kester et al, 1994).

Less than 70% of students in the largest study reviewed rated access to evening program services as good or excellent (Michigan State Board of Education, 1990). However, most respondents in the studies gave the actual quality of programs or services a favorable review (Amos, 1991; Evans et al., 1993; Spicer, 1990; Sworder, 1991). Sinclair Community College (1994) finds returning students less likely to offer a favorable opinion of counselor and instructor services.

Areas singled out for improvement in college services included availability of advisors, access to facilities, and visibility of security (McCormick, 1994); improved access to bookstore, food services, library, and computer labs (Hect, 1991); and extended hours for a variety of services (Stolar, 1991). Although few students make appointments to meet with instructors (Sworder, 1991), most think their instructors are accessible (Evans et al., 1993; Sworder,

1991). Instructors and students are not always in agreement regarding what services are needed in the evenings (Lucas, 1992), and community college students typically spend little time on campus outside of class and have limited opportunities to take advantage of some services (Douzenis, 1994).

Student surveys (Palmer, 1992), telephone polls (Baca et al, 1993; Michigan State Board of Education, 1990), and focus groups (Schauerman et al., 1993) are all acceptable methods to collect information regarding opinions. Design of a survey should include a range of options for student responses that can be converted to numbers for easy comparison (Amos, 1991; Merren, 1992). Results of an opinion study are useful in helping bring about change within an institution (McCormick, 1992).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Procedures

The evaluation methodology was used in this study because the underlying problem was addressed and the research questions were answered by conducting an assessment of student opinions regarding class scheduling, and the quality and availability of program services. Procedures followed in answering the research questions for this study are delineated below.

Several procedures were used to complete this evaluation practicum. First, a review of literature was conducted to gain an understanding of methods to assess student satisfaction with scheduling and services, and to glean information from other similar studies that would be helpful in conducting this study. The literature review included theoretical topics on student opinions of evening class scheduling, the relationship of student success to programs and scheduling, and the quality and availability of evening program services. Applied research that offered information about collection methods to gather evening students' opinions was also reviewed.

Second, objectives for the evening program relating to services and class scheduling were identified and criteria for measurement of success were articulated with the help of a formative committee. The committee (see Appendix A for formative committee membership and selection procedures) included one vice president of instruction, one faculty member, and one librarian. All were employed by North Arkansas Community/Technical College and were familiar with the institution's evening program objectives, schedule, and services. Criteria were developed as a result of information gleaned from the literature review and three meetings in the spring of 1995 with the formative committee.

Third, a questionnaire (see Appendix D for a copy of the questionnaire) was developed to obtain students' assessment of the evening program class schedule and services. Formative committee members assisted in the development of key areas for questions and reviewed the questionnaire for content and face validity. Some of the item examples of questions were gleaned from the literature review. It was determined that an in-class opinion questionnaire would be the most efficient and effective method of collecting data from students.

Based on the example of other studies, the survey also was designed to collect demographic information about the students to assist the college in its marketing efforts (see Appendix C for a summary of other information gleaned from the survey).

The survey was divided into 19 parts. Questions solicited information on each student's age, sex, work hours and times, hours of college enrollment, class attendance patterns (night only, or day and night), reason for attending college, preference for early evening and late afternoon starting times, interest in taking a Friday night class, preference in class length and frequency, extent of satisfaction with the variety of classes, extent of satisfaction with the times classes were offered, extent of satisfaction with the days classes were offered, and extent of satisfaction with the availability and quality of 12 different services. Students were also asked what newspapers they read and what radio stations they listen to, and how they found out about the class they were taking.

Degree-seeking and certificate-seeking students were asked to name their major and indicate if they thought they could complete the program only at night.

Students were also provided room to make written comments.

Three major revisions were made on the questionnaire before it was used in the study. Revisions were based on formative committee recommendations.

Fourth, the questionnaire was administered to a cluster random sample of 120 students enrolled in 10 different classes during the 1995 spring semester at North Arkansas Community/Technical College. Two sample classes were chosen at random from evening classes offered in each of the college's four major academic divisions (Humanities; Business; Allied Health; and Math and Science) and the Technology area. There were 54 sections of classes offered during the semester by NACTC.

Fifth, data from the survey were reported and analyzed, using descriptive statistics. Findings were used to measure success of evening program objectives, based on evening program objectives and criteria previously established.

Sixth, a summative committee of experts looked at the results of the analysis for validation purposes.

This summative committee of experts consisted of one college president, one chief academic administrator, one faculty member, and one librarian from another postsecondary institution (see Appendix B for a complete listing of summative committee participants and why and how they were chosen).

Seventh, results of the study were given to the president of NACTC and the college's vice president of instruction. Study results were also shared with the college's marketing committee.

Assumptions

For this practicum, it was assumed that members of the formative committee had the knowledge to guide an analysis of the college's evening program class schedule and services. It was also assumed that the current theory of assessment of evening students' opinions is the most accurate and useful for a two-year college setting. It was further assumed that the summative committee's evaluation of the results of the analysis was valid.

Limitations

Although the sample was selected in a cluster random process, the study was limited by the size of the

sample. The study was also limited in that it analyzed only the schedule of classes and services offered to evening students at NACTC. The results are not generalizable to other two-year colleges.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The literature review and formative committee meetings produced recommendations for the organization and administration of an evening student survey. Evening program objectives identified for this study included:

1. North Arkansas Community/Technical College will offer a sufficient variety of courses at night to meet student needs.

2. North Arkansas Community/Technical College will offer evening courses at times that meet student needs.

3. North Arkansas Community/Technical College will offer evening course on days that meet student needs.

4. North Arkansas Community/Technical College will make the following services available to evening students: (a) bookstore, (b) food services, (c) library, (d) counseling/advising, (e) registration, (f) business office, (g) instructional support laboratory (ISL), (h) computer labs, (i) tutoring, (j) financial aid, (k) veterans' services, and (l) instructor office hours.

5. North Arkansas Community/Technical College will provide quality services to evening students.

The formative committee met three times to discuss criteria for accomplishing evening program objectives. Committee members agreed that at least 70% of respondents with opinions on individual items should indicate that they are very satisfied or satisfied with evening class schedule variety, times, and days; very satisfied or satisfied with availability of each of the 12 services; and very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of each of the 12 services.

The survey was administered to 120 students in 10 different evening classes (College Algebra, Weight Training, Machine Shop, Welding, Pasture Management, LOTUS 1-2-3, Emergency Medical Technology, Basic Anatomy and Physiology Lab, English Composition I, and Western Civilization). The study was conducted during one week in May near the end of the 1995 spring semester.

Results of this study were examined by summative committee members in early September of 1995. Following review of the evening program objectives, criteria to measure success, the survey instrument, and results, summative committee members agreed that the study was

conducted in a valid manner to determine if criteria were accomplished. The following comments were made by members of the summative committee:

1. The general organization of the study made sense in terms of collecting the data required.

2. The research questions were clear and matched objectives.

3. The organization of the questionnaire was clear and related well to the research questions.

4. The method used to analyze satisfaction levels was sensible, including the 70% level that was established.

Two suggestions were made by summative committee members for a future study: (a) conduct research to determine what should be done to improve services that were not rated highly, and (b) study Saturday classes and services.

The research questions for this study were:

1. What are evening students' opinions of the evening class schedule offered by North Arkansas Community/Technical College?

2. What are evening students' opinions of services offered by North Arkansas Community/Technical College?

Opinions Of Class Schedule

Table 1 lists student opinions of evening class variety, times, and days. Student satisfaction satisfied criteria only for class days. Seventy-seven percent of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with days classes met, 63% were very satisfied or satisfied with class times, and 58% were very satisfied or satisfied with the variety of courses offered.

Table 1

Opinions Regarding Class Scheduling

	Scheduling Item		
	Variety	Times	Days
Student Satisfaction			
1. Very satisfied	19	14	18
2. Satisfied	48	58	64
3. Somewhat satisfied	39	33	23
4. Dissatisfied	6	9	2
5. Very dissatisfied	4	1	0

Note. Four students did not indicate a choice on evening class variety, five on times, and 13 on days.

Opinions Of Services

Availability

A breakdown of responses to the survey item on program service availability is included in Table 2. Of the 12 services listed in the survey, the criteria of 70% or more students very satisfied or satisfied with the availability of services was met by four services: library (76%), instructor availability to students (75%), computer labs (71%), and instructional support lab (70%).

The percentages of satisfaction with availability of the other eight services ranged from 37% to 68%. They included: bookstore (42%), food services (37%), counseling/advising 51%, registration 45%, business office (55%), tutoring (68%), financial aid (56%), and veterans' services (60%). Surveys indicating no opinion on an item were not included in percentage calculations.

Table 2

Service Availability Ratings

Service Offered	Rating 5	4	3	2	1	0
1. Bookstore	8	30	19	20	14	29
2. Food Services	5	23	13	14	20	45
3. Library	30	44	16	3	4	23
4. Counseling/Advising	15	28	21	16	4	36
5. Registration	14	32	35	11	11	17
6. Business Office	17	34	25	10	6	28
7. ISL	21	35	12	8	4	40
8. Computer Labs	18	40	16	5	3	38
9. Tutoring	14	25	12	4	2	63
10. Financial Aid	18	22	18	6	8	48
11. Veterans' Services	9	13	10	3	2	83
12. Instructor Availability	37	38	18	3	4	20

Note. 5 = Very satisfied, 4 = Satisfied, 3 = Somewhat satisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 1 = Very dissatisfied, and 0 = No opinion. ISL = Instructional Support Laboratory.

Quality

Table 3 contains a breakdown of responses to the question of program service quality. Of the 12 services studied, the criteria of 70% or more students very satisfied or satisfied with quality of services was met by four services: library (76%), instructor availability to students (72%), computer labs (72%), and instructional support lab (70%).

Satisfaction with the quality of the other eight services studied ranged from 46% to 64%. They included: bookstore (49%), food services (46%), counseling/advising 53%, registration 50%, business office (54%), tutoring (64%), financial aid (58%), and veterans' services (61%). Surveys indicating no opinion on an item were not included in the percentage calculations.

Table 3

Service Quality Ratings

Service Offered	Rating 5	4	3	2	1	0
1. Bookstore	13	30	21	9	15	32
2. Food Services	6	25	13	13	11	52
3. Library	35	34	18	3	1	29
4. Counseling/Advising	17	24	23	10	4	42
5. Registration	17	31	29	10	9	24
6. Business Office	15	35	20	8	5	27
7. ISL	21	29	14	6	1	49
8. Computer Labs	19	37	16	5	1	42
9. Tutoring	12	25	13	7	1	62
10. Financial Aid	18	22	12	8	9	51
11. Veterans' Services	8	11	9	1	2	31
12. Instructor Availability	38	30	19	3	4	26

Note. 5 = Very satisfied, 4 = Satisfied, 3 = Somewhat satisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 1 = Very dissatisfied, and 0 = No opinion. ISL = Instructional Support Laboratory.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

During a four-year period, from 1991 through 1994, there was a decline in enrollment in evening courses offered by North Arkansas Community/Technical College. The problem under investigation was the lack of data available regarding customer (student) opinions of the evening program. The purpose of this study was to analyze the college's evening program, focusing on student opinions regarding services and the class schedule.

The results of this study confirm the findings of Head (1991), McCormick (1992), McCormick (1994), Sinclair Community College (1994), and Stolar (1991) that there is a need for more variety of evening classes. It was evident from the beginning of the literature review that variety of classes, scheduling, and class overlap were problems noted in several studies of evening programs.

This study confirmed the findings of Amos (1991) that evening students were generally satisfied with

library services. However, it differs from a study by Michigan State Board of Education (1990) in the area of evening student satisfaction with computer labs. Less than half (44%) of Michigan community college students rated computer lab services as excellent or good. More than two-thirds of NACTC evening respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with access to computer labs (71%) and with the quality of the services (72%).

The report by McCormick (1994) that students' evening program issues include availability of advisors is supported by this study. The study also agrees with Hect (1991) that students need better access to food services and bookstore, but does not support findings requiring greater access to the library and computer labs. With the exception of library services and learning lab (instructional support lab), the findings of Stolar (1991) are confirmed suggesting extended access to the bookstore, cafeteria (food services), counseling, advising, and financial aid.

Another area of common agreement in the literature surveyed that is also supported by this study was access to instructors outside of class. Results of this study support findings by Evans et al. (1993), Michigan State

Board of Education (1990), Sinclair Community College (1994), and Sworder (1991) that instructors are available.

Students in the welding and machine shop classes on the North Campus may not have been familiar with the college's instructional support laboratory (ISL). Respondents from those two classes rated the ISL very high in both availability and quality. It appears likely that they thought the question referred to the laboratory portion of their own classes, constituting a threat to internal validity on the items rating the ISL on availability and quality in this study.

Conclusions

Information useful for making decisions regarding evening class schedules and services offered to evening students can be obtained using procedures outlined in this practicum. Although the questionnaire will require modification, based on services offered to evening students, this study can be replicated.

Both committees used in this evaluation study provided substantial assistance. The formative committee reviewed information and alternatives presented, supplied criteria for success in each area

examined, and assisted in the development and validation of the instrument used, the questionnaire, in the context of their knowledge of the college and its evening program. The summative committee provided an external validation of the study, based on the criteria developed. Data collected in this study should be helpful to college administrators.

Implications

This study has demonstrated that improvement is needed in the variety and times of classes scheduled for evening students at North Arkansas Community/Technical College. Methods should also be explored to improve the evening access and quality of the college's bookstore, food services, counseling/advising, registration, business office, computer labs, tutoring, financial aid office, and veterans' services, based on the results.

The library, computer labs, instructor availability, and instructional support laboratory received satisfactory ratings regarding access and quality, although North Campus students' familiarity with the ISL may have clouded the results of that item. Students were also satisfied with the days evening classes are offered. The data collected in this study

should be useful in the design and improvement of the evening program at NACTC.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon the findings of this study:

1. Results of this study should be reviewed and utilized by the college's senior administrators, department heads of each of the service areas examined, and marketing committee.

2. Further research to determine specific classes required by evening students at the college, and the reasons that students are not satisfied with some services should be conducted. A re-examination of the ISL should also be conducted as a part of a future study.

3. An ad-hoc committee, chaired by the vice president of instruction, should be organized to review such innovative programs as Hazard Community College's continuous quality improvement process in class scheduling, and San Jose City College's Afternoon College.

4. An evening program supervisor should be hired to assist students in service and other problems.

5. Services to evening students should be expanded. Consideration should be given to extending office hours in the student services (financial aid, counseling/advising, veterans' services) and tutoring areas. Extended hours are also recommended for the business office, bookstore, and registrar's office during registration periods.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Formative Evaluation Committee

Three NACTC employees were members of the formative evaluation committee. They included: Dr. Gordon Watts, vice president of instruction; Eva White, assistant librarian; and Paula Moore, adjunct evening instructor. Formative committee members were selected from a population that included one college vice president of instruction, 14 service department heads and administrators, and 45 faculty members who teach at least one evening class. The following criteria were considered in selection of the formative evaluation committee: (a) familiarity with NACTC's evening program and services; (b) role at the college; (c) experience and expertise; (d) the need for representation of programs, academic scheduling, and instruction; and (e) availability.

Appendix B

Summative Evaluation Committee

Members of the summative evaluation committee represented a team of professionals from the same institution, Northwest Arkansas Community College in Rogers, Arkansas. Committee members included: Dr. Bob C. Burns, president; Dr. Karen Hodges, dean of instruction; Dr. Anita Jones, lead faculty member for communication and the arts; and Louis Lamb, library director.

Northwest Arkansas Community College is a public two-year college with a mission very similar to that of North Arkansas Community/Technical College. The decision to select a team of professionals from one institution to serve on the formative committee was made based on the recommendation of Dr. Bill Baker, president of North Arkansas Community/Technical College. The reasons included a similarity between NACTC and Northwest Arkansas Community College of mission, services, location, and clientele. Northwest Arkansas Community College's team of professionals was chosen from 25 Arkansas two-year colleges.

Appendix C

Other Information From Survey Respondents

Of students who responded to the survey, 66 were males and 54 females (the number of males in technical programs and the representation of male baseball players in night classes tends to make evening classes more male-populated than daytime courses). There were 38 traditional male students and 28 non-traditional male students. A total of 19 traditional female students and 35 non-traditional female students were surveyed. The average age of respondents was 27.6, and 79.2% also had jobs. The average hours worked per week among respondents with jobs was 33.8, and the average college load for all students surveyed was 10.6 hours. The average class load for students who took only evening classes was 6.4 hours.

Seventy-seven students surveyed indicated they also took at least one day class; 41 took night courses only. Of those studied, 94 students listed a degree or certificate as their objective, 23 took classes to improve job skills, and 11 were enrolled for personal enrichment. Some students listed more than one reason for attending class.

The preferred starting time was 6 p.m. among times included in the survey. Over 76% of respondents were not interested in taking classes on Friday nights, and a single three-hour class once each week was preferred by 81 students (70%), compared to 35 (30%) who favored two one and one-half hour classes per week. The class schedule was named most often as the method students found out about the class they were taking.

The most common starting time for work was 7 a.m. (21 respondents), and 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. (12 each) were the most common times students stopped work each day. Allied health (24) and business (23) were the most popular major fields.

Thirty-one students said they listened to Harrison radio station KHOZ, and 21 said they tuned in to Harrison station KCWD. The Harrison Daily Times had 60 readers among survey participants. The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, the only daily newspaper with state-wide circulation in Arkansas, was named by 13 respondents.

Appendix D

NACTC Evening Student Survey

NACTC Evening Student Survey

1. Age _____ 2. Sex: Male _____ Female _____

3. Hours you work per week ___ 4. Work times: _ to _

5. How many credit hours are you taking at NACTC this semester? _____

6. Do you take classes during the day (before 5 p.m.) in addition to this evening class? ____Yes ____ No

7. Which of the following statements **best describes** your reason for taking classes at NACTC?

_____ I am working to obtain a degree or certificate at NACTC and/or plan to transfer to another college.

_____ I am taking classes to improve skills for promotion or advancement where I work.

_____ I am taking the class for fun or personal enrichment.

8. What would be your preference for the starting time of evening classes? Rate each of the following class starting times from "5" for HIGH PREFERENCE to "1" for LOW PREFERENCE. Mark "0" if you would be unable to attend classes starting at this time.

	PREFERENCE					
TIME	**High**				**Low**	**Unable to attend**
3:30	5	4	3	2	1	0
4:00	5	4	3	2	1	0
4:30	5	4	3	2	1	0
5:00	5	4	3	2	1	0
5:30	5	4	3	2	1	0
6:00	5	4	3	2	1	0
6:30	5	4	3	2	1	0

9. Would you be interested in taking a Friday night class? _____ Yes _____ No

10. Do you prefer to take an evening class offered:

_____ 1 1/2 hours per session, two nights a week.

_____ 3 hours per session, one night per week.

11. To what extent are you satisfied with the **VARIETY** of courses offered by NACTC in the evening?

_____ Very Satisfied _____ Dissatisfied

_____ Satisfied _____ Very Dissatisfied

_____ Somewhat satisfied _____ No opinion

12. To what extent are you satisfied with the **TIMES** that courses are offered by NACTC in the evening?

_____ Very Satisfied _____ Dissatisfied

_____ Satisfied _____ Very Dissatisfied

_____ Somewhat satisfied _____ No opinion

13. To what extent are you satisfied with the **DAYS** that evening courses are offered by NACTC?

_____ Very Satisfied _____ Dissatisfied

_____ Satisfied _____ Very Dissatisfied

_____ Somewhat satisfied _____ No opinion

14. To what extent are you satisfied with the **AVAILABILITY** of the following services to evening students at NACTC? Please circle the number that corresponds with your satisfaction with each of the following services:

5 = Very satisfied 2 = Dissatisfied
4 = Satisfied 1 = Very dissatisfied
3 = Somewhat satisfied 0 = No opinion

A.	BOOKSTORE	5	4	3	2	1	0
B.	FOOD SERVICES	5	4	3	2	1	0
C.	LIBRARY	5	4	3	2	1	0
D.	COUNSELING/ADVISING	5	4	3	2	1	0
E.	REGISTRATION	5	4	3	2	1	0
F.	BUSINESS OFFICE	5	4	3	2	1	0
G.	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT LABORATORY (ISL)	5	4	3	2	1	0
H.	COMPUTER LABS	5	4	3	2	1	0
I.	TUTORING	5	4	3	2	1	0
J.	FINANCIAL AID	5	4	3	2	1	0
K.	VETERANS' SERVICES	5	4	3	2	1	0
L.	INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY TO STUDENTS	5	4	3	2	1	0

15. To what extent are you satisfied with the **QUALITY** of the following services to evening students at NACTC? Please circle the number that corresponds with your satisfaction with each of the following services:

5 = Very satisfied
4 = Satisfied
3 = Somewhat satisfied
2 = Dissatisfied
1 = Very dissatisfied
0 = No opinion

A.	BOOKSTORE	5	4	3	2	1	0
B.	FOOD SERVICES	5	4	3	2	1	0
C.	LIBRARY	5	4	3	2	1	0
D.	COUNSELING/ADVISING	5	4	3	2	1	0
E.	REGISTRATION	5	4	3	2	1	0
F.	BUSINESS OFFICE	5	4	3	2	1	0
G.	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT LABORATORY (ISL)	5	4	3	2	1	0
H.	COMPUTER LABS	5	4	3	2	1	0
I.	TUTORING	5	4	3	2	1	0
J.	FINANCIAL AID	5	4	3	2	1	0
K.	VETERANS' SERVICES	5	4	3	2	1	0
L.	INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY TO STUDENTS	5	4	3	2	1	0

16. What newspaper, if any, do you subscribe to or read on a regular basis? _____

17. What radio station, if any, do you listen to the most often? _____

18. How did you find out about this class? _____

_____

19. **TO BE COMPLETED BY DEGREE- OR CERTIFICATE-SEEKING STUDENTS ONLY:**

A. Are classes scheduled so that you can obtain your degree or certificate by only attending evening classes?

_____ Yes _____ No

B. What is your major? _____

Please use the rest of this page and the backs of the survey pages to write any comments or suggestions for improvement in the college's evening program, including any classes you would like to see offered in the evening. If you were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with services or the schedule, we welcome your suggestions for their improvement.

THANK YOU!